

Congressman Tom Udall (NM-3)
Floor Statement
Legislation to Designate the Federal Courthouse in Santa Fe, NM after
Judge Santiago Campos
1/17/07

Madame Speaker,

I rise today to honor Judge Santiago Campos by reintroducing legislation to name the Federal Courthouse in Santa Fe, New Mexico, after him. We are approaching the sixth anniversary of his passing, which occurred on January 20, 2001, and naming this courthouse after the first Hispanic appointed to the federal bench in New Mexico is a long overdue tribute. I am again pleased to be joined in introducing this legislation by Representatives Gonzales, Grijalva, McDermott, Green and Pastor. They have all cosponsored in the past and I thank them for cosponsoring again.

Judge Santiago Campos was the first Hispanic appointed to the federal bench in New Mexico, serving from 1978 until his death in 2001, including as chief judge from 1987 through 1989. Judge Campos' career of public service only culminated with his service as a United States District Court Judge, as he also served in the United States Navy as a Seaman First Class from 1944 to 1946, as the Assistant and First Assistant Attorney General of New Mexico from 1954 to 1957, and as a District Court Judge from 1971 to 1978 in the First Judicial District in the State of New Mexico. Judge Campos served with distinction on the bench and displayed both firmness and compassion with those who entered his courtroom. He was a life long resident of New Mexico and graduated first in his law school class at the University of New Mexico.

Judge Campos was very active in his courtroom, often exercising his right to question witnesses in the middle of cross-examinations. Many agree that he became more involved in a case than other judges, but still let a lawyer try his own case. One of his most memorable cases ordered the Gannett Co. to return The New Mexican, Santa Fe's daily newspaper, to its former owner, Robert McKinney due to a breach of contract.

During his career, Campos was an honorary member of the Order of the Coif. He also received the Distinguished Achievement Award of the State Bar of New Mexico in 1993, and in the same year the University of New Mexico honored him with a Distinguished Achievement Award.

Madame Speaker, following his passing, the New Mexico State Legislature passed a joint memorial requesting Congress to name the Federal Courthouse in Santa Fe, New Mexico, after Judge Campos. Judge Campos had his chambers in this courthouse for over 22 years. In addition, the judges of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals who reside in New Mexico and the district judges of the District of New Mexico unanimously requested and support Congressional action to name the Federal Courthouse after Judge Campos. I am pleased to once again take up this effort.

I am hopeful this will be the year to get this legislation passed and signed into law to honor this great man with a small token of appreciation for the remarkable life that he lived.

Thank you.